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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. External Scene. The plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee came to a close on March 10 without producing overt condemnation of the Chinese and without indication of Soviet commitment to a complex of inter-related internal and external policies which would offer definite prospects of a rapidly rising standard of living within the USSR and a relaxation of tension in foreign relations. At the same time there was also no sign that KHRUSHCHEV was having second thoughts about earlier decisions to increase pressure on the Chinese Communists in the ideological dispute. The period under review coincides with the final phase of the "election campaign" for the Supreme Soviet and most of the top Soviet leaders, except for Khrushchev, had made speeches to their constituencies by March 15. Some of these, such as CPSU Central Committee Secretary PONOMARYEV, evidently discussed interbloc relations in considerable detail. But much was eliminated in published accounts that it was difficult to derive any thoughts about the Soviet-Chinese conflict from such speeches. On the other hand, MIKOYAN's speech to his constituency in Soviet Armenia on March 15, even in the abbreviated form presented in the Soviet press, revealed fundamental divergence over disarmament and peaceful coexistence within the communist movement.

Although the situation in South Vietnam showed signs of becoming a major issue in Soviet propaganda at the beginning of March, this problem by and large faded from view in the Soviet press during the past week, raising a question of whether previous concentration on the issue was designed more to backstop the Soviet party delegation to the DRV, headed by Ponomaryev, than as a reflection of Soviet concern about the military situation in South Vietnam or its potential as a new focus of attention in the East/West struggle. Similarly, events in Laos went by virtually unrecorded by Soviet press and nothing was said about the reported agreement of the Indonesian and Dutch Governments to negotiate upon the West New Guinea question. The reorganization of the Indonesian Government was presented as a gain for the Communist Party, the press making it appear that Communist leaders were in effect entering the Indonesian Government.

2. Disarmament. As the 18-nation disarmament conference approached its opening day, the Soviet press was full of commentaries, despatches and reports which conveyed the overall impression that the West, especially the US, was opposed to genuine disarmament while the Soviet Union and many neutral and "peaceloving" peoples around the globe favored and worked assiduously toward the goal of complete and general disarmament. The President's announced intention to resume US atmospheric testing was generally cited as a concrete indication that US was only interested in talking and not in acting in this area. In this connection, it is noteworthy that the Soviet press has not fully reported the President's formulation to the effect that the US would not test if an acceptable nuclear test treaty were negotiated by the time the US tests are to get underway.

Soviet commentaries on disarmament revealed that the Soviets continued to be preoccupied with the question of verification, especially as it applied to the immediate problem of a ban on testing. As heretofore, Soviet journalists contended that Western inspection requirements were unacceptable since their

implementation would be tantamount to a "massive invasion" of Soviet territory for espionage purposes.

On a more positive note, several commentaries spoke approvingly of the joint US-USSR agreement on disarmament principles, noting that no previous disarmament conference had a similar basis on which to start its work.

On March 12-13 the Soviet Union published Gromyko's letters of March 10 to UN Secretary General U Thant in which Soviet support was expressed for: (1) a convention banning the use of nuclear weapons, (2) the establishment of atom-free zones in various parts of the globe, and (3) an agreement on non-dissemination of nuclear weapons and information which would involve the assumption of specified obligations by nuclear and non-nuclear powers alike.

One of the interesting sidelights on the disarmament question was the manner in which commentaries and reports at times appeared to be focused on Sino-Soviet differences on this problem. Thus, for example, the Soviet press gave prominent treatment to Mikoyan's remarks to his Supreme Soviet constituency in Yerevan in which he asserted that disarmament would not impede but would promote the spread of Communism because it would make it difficult for imperialist countries to suppress national liberation movements and facilitate the final liquidation of colonialism. However, in defending the Soviet position against "leftist" (presumably Chinese) accusations of softness, Mikoyan, in referring to disarmament as a slogan, seemed to approach the Chinese position that as long as imperialism exists disarmament should not be treated as a goal, but as a weapon in the world struggle.

3. Germany And Berlin. On the eve of the Geneva meeting of the foreign ministers of the US, the USSR and the UK, Soviet commentary on Germany and Berlin was marked by three recurrent themes: (1) moderately-worded warnings that the Soviet Union would not tolerate endless delay in achieving a peace treaty; (2) denunciation of the Western proposal regarding the establishment of an International Access Authority; and (3) suggestions that the normalization of relations between the Soviet Union and the FRG was desirable. The call for improved relations did not advance any enticements to the FRG in the political sphere, but seemed to be based on the Soviet belief that economic and trade considerations would, in the final analysis, be cause enough for the FRG to seek better relations with Moscow. In any event, the door to FRG-Soviet bilateral talks still seemed to be wide open, judging by these commentaries.

Although press coverage from Geneva indicated that Berlin was under discussion in the Rusk-Home-Gromyko conversations, the press was silent about recent air corridor developments, including the dropping of chaff to disrupt radar communications.

4. Chinese Communist Ambassador Reappears on the Scene. The Chinese Communist Ambassador to the USSR, Liu Hsiao, who apparently has been absent from Moscow for many months and whose presence in the USSR has not been noted by the Soviet press since November 2, 1961, was reported on March 14 as being among a group of foreign diplomats currently visiting the Central Asian city of Tashkent.

The Embassy learned from another mission which has relations with Communist China that Liu Hsiao turned up as host at a cocktail party at the Chinese Communist Embassy here around March 3, for which invitations had been sent in the name of the Charge d'Affaires. Liu's whereabouts have been a source of interest to foreign observers in Moscow because of his frequent absences from Moscow during a period when Soviet-Chinese relations are obviously undergoing great strain. His reappearance in Moscow after a considerable absence does not necessarily indicate any easing of tension in Soviet-Chinese relations, as it may be in the interest of both Moscow and Peiping to give the appearance of correctness in their bilateral relations and to avoid charges that they have contributed to the strains by formal demonstrations of disagreement.

5. Latin American Developments. The Soviet press indicated that two Latin American communist parties have held or are holding party congresses. TASS reported that the Equadorian party ended its 7th session in Guayaquil on March 13 and that this was the first time such a meeting had been held in circumstances of "full freedom" for many years. Among the important results of the meeting, as presented by the Soviet press, were a strong expression of solidarity for Cuba, indication of confidence in Soviet strength and assistance, and alignment with Moscow in condemning Albania.

A message from the CPSU Central Committee to the 12th session of the Chilean Communist Party, published in Pravda on March 15, also highlighted Cuba. It said that the defense of Cuba is also the defense of the honor and independence of each country and all the peoples of Latin America.

The Soviet press reported that food rationing has been introduced in Cuba. To rationalize this development it cited Castro's claim that although overall food production has increased in Cuba "since the revolution," production still lags behind the rapidly growing demand of the population and the increase of the latter's purchasing power.

INTERNAL - POLITICAL

6. Leadership: Election "Campaign" Nears Its End. As the week drew to its close, all the members and candidate-members of the Presidium and secretaries of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee had delivered their election speeches -- except N. S. KHRUSHCHEV. In an inversion of the Biblical promise, the first will be last and Khrushchev's address to a meeting of the electorate of Moscow's Kalinin election district will take place in the late afternoon of March 16.

Even K. T. MAZUROV, the First Secretary of the Byelorussian Communist Party, put in a belated appearance (WEEKA No. 10, March 9). The March 16 Pravda reported that he addfessed a meeting of the electorate of First Minsk City election district on March 15, and published an account of his speech below that of F. R. KOZLOV in the Kirov election district of Leningrad. The peculiarity of the timing of Mazurov's speech -- all four of his fellow candidate-members of the Presidium had spoken before the March 5-9 Central Committee Plenum -- and his absence from the Plenum itself, could, in any normally governed country, be explained on the grounds of illness. In the USSR, where

the illnesses of top leaders are rarely the subject of reliable report, a doubt must linger in the mind of the observer.

The speeches of full members of the Presidium contain interesting echoes of the marking time which characterized the March Plenum.

Kozlov appeared as a strong proponent of priority for heavy industry. "The question of questions of our movement forward is capital construction", he is reported to have told the Kirov district voters (Pravda, March 16). As for agriculture, it already possesses "enormous reserves" which can apparently be turned into increased production primarily by improvements in the use of land and "leadership". The March Plenum gets only passing mention from Kozlov.

Others in the ruling collective, however, found that "an obligatory condition for the construction of Communism is the creation, alongside a mighty industry, of a fully developed, highly productive agriculture" (Kosygin, Pravda, March 14) and emphasized that "the level of production of agricultural products lags behind demand" (Shvernik, ibid.). Some leaders said the March Plenum was an event of "enormous historical importance."

The treatment of construction and the housing problem in these speeches also contains different emphases.

It thus appears that the Plenum accurately reflected the inability of the members of the Presidium to reach agreement on the direction of capital investment.

As at the Plenum, so in these speeches, the "anti-Party group" appears to have receded into the background, although it is not forgotten. All the Presidium members who mentioned it treated the problem of the "group" as a purely political affair which was over and done with, with the exception of BREZHNEV (Pravda, March 15), who said the "group" had "wallowed in the mistakes and crimes of the period of the cult of personality."

The most interesting single point presented by these speeches lay, however, in Kozlov's return to a theme that had distinguished his report at the XXII Congress. "The highest principle of Party leadership," he repeated on March 15, "is collective leadership. The Party resolutely declared /in its new Program and Statute/ that the cult of personality, and the violations of inner-Party democracy connected with it, cannot be tolerated; they are incompatible with the Leninist principles of Party life, alien to the fabric of the socialist system. But, struggling against the cult of personality and its inimical consequences, the Party does not deny the significance of experienced, authoritative leaders. Without that, one cannot carry on the cause of Communist construction, cannot assure the succession of leadership and the transmittal of accumulated experience."

Kozlov has clearly not lost sight of the fact that, as "Second" Secretary of the Central Committee, there is something for him to guard against, as well as something he looks forward to inheriting.

7. Moscow Ban on Baking Matzohs for Passover. The Embassy has learned from reliable sources that the single bakery in Moscow which has provided unleavened bread (matzohs) for the Jewish Passover over the years has this year been forbidden to bake them for Passover 1962, which is from April 19 to 26. In the past, matzohs have usually been available in Moscow for from two to three months before Passover.

The Chief Rabbi of Moscow has unsuccessfully protested this year's ban to the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults. Baking of matzohs privately in the small Soviet home ovens is theoretically possible, but the rites involved and the crowded conditions in Moscow quarters make this most difficult. Hence the commercial baking ban is tantamount to the serious restriction of an important Jewish religious observance.

Last year, matzohs were sold in only three major Soviet cities: Tbilisi, Moscow, and Leningrad. In Kiev, the baking of matzohs was not permitted for Passover, 1961, continuing in force the ban imposed in 1960, but the Jews of Kiev were able to buy them in Tbilisi and Moscow. The situation in Tbilisi and Leningrad this year is not yet known.

8. Are Party Members Beyond the Law? N. MIRONOV, Chief of the CPSU Central Committee's Section on Administrative Organs, has written an article entitled "Strengthening Socialist Legality and Law and Order" (Party Life, no. 5, 1962). Mironov's responsibilities are believed to include supervision of courts and police as well as administrative control over security activities in ardout of the Party.

Mironov praises the work of the druzhinniki and comradely courts and justifies reintroduction during the past year of the death penalty in several areas of Soviet law (WEEKA No. 9, March 2, 1962). He explains that the persistence of certain criminal attitudes in the USSR is due largely to the continued existence of influences from the capitalist world and partly to the fact that "the socialist order, with its humanitarian and advanced ideas and attitudes, has acted on the consciousness of people for only several decades".

Perhaps most significant, Mironov severely criticizes Party members who are permitted to hide behind their Party cards and thus to escape criminal responsibility for their actions.

"V. I. LENIN was against defending lawbreakers solely on the basis that they were members of our Party. On the contrary, he demanded elimination of any possibility of using the situation of the ruling Party to diminish the responsibility of Communists who had broken the laws of the Soviet power ... The practice of forbidding the bringing to trial of members of the Party who have perpetrated crimes simply because Party punishment has been imposed upon them, is wrong. A Party sentence may not be substituted for responsibility before the law. It does not follow from the intent of the Party Statute that the question of legal responsibility of citizens can be resolved variously: for Communists -- by Party organs, but for non-Party people -- by court organs and the prosecutor. On the contrary, from the essence of the CPSU Statute, it follows that in cases in which a Party member has perpetrated a crime, he is subject to expulsion from

the Party and should bear responsibility to the judicial order to no less a degree than any other person."

Mironov's remarks were not made with reference to the "anti-Party group," but their applicability to its members is apparent.

9. Lecture by Ehrenburg "Postponed". Il'ya Grigoryevich EHRENBURG was scheduled to deliver a lecture on his memoirs on March 15, at the RSFSR Public Historical Library. On that date, no tickets were being sold at the Library. Instead, a sign reading, "Postponed Until Further Notice", was pasted over the poster announcing the lecture.

The postponement comes shortly after the text of Komsomol First Secretary PAVLOV's speech at the December 25-28 Moscow ideological conference became available in "The XXII Congress of the CPSU and Questions of Ideological Work" (Moscow, 1962; signed to the press February 7). Pavlov said: "Recently, certain thick journals have amused themselves by printing expansive memoirs, in which all those notorious complications and internal sensations of the author, which frequently offer neither comprehensible nor social interest, are described in detail."

10. De-Stalinization: New Medals (Lenin-Style) for Old (Stalin-Style). On March 2, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet decreed that recipients of the International STALIN (since 1956 LENIN) Prize for Strengthening Peace between Peoples, who had received their awards before 1957, could exchange their "Stalin" medals and certificates for the corresponding "Lenin" certificates and gold medals (Vedomosti of the USSR Supreme Soviet, No. 10, March 8, 1962, item 102).

This change in the law which defines the Lenin Peace Prize awards provides a good illustration of the two different phases of the campaign to denigrate Stalin. When the name of the peace prize was changed on September 6, 1956, no provision was made for exchanging medals already awarded. Doubtless the severe position taken towards Stalin at the XXII Congress in initiating phase two of his denigration has been embarrassing to recipients of the prize, particularly those in foreign countries.

The March 2 Soviet decree provides a neat contrast to the March 5 action of the Chinese People's Committee for World Peace, establishing a Stalin Peace Prize.

11. Vigilance: More On the Armenian Plane High-Jackers. On March 3, 1962, the Armenian newspaper Kommunist published an article entitled "How Could That Have Happened?" It adds a few details concerning the foiled attempt to high-jack a plane in Armenia last year (WEEKA No. 50, December 15, 1961).

The article follows the efforts of Genrikh SEKOYAN to find accomplices for an attempt to flee the USSR in a plane high-jacked for the occasion. The article describes Sekoyan as a malcontent who "in a fit of rage tore up his Komsomol card" and who took plane trips to various rayons in Armenia "seeking a suitable place for an escape flight."

The story of Sekoyan's unsuccessful attempt to flee the USSR provides the regime with a useful frame on which to hang several "vigilance" themes. Criticism is levied against the high-jacker's co-workers who "did not know how Sekoyan used his free time" after his work at a factory, where he earned "pretty good" wages. A civilian pilot implicated himself in the affair by giving Sekoyan the rudiments of pilot training and navigation without knowing how this knowledge would be used.

From this "regrettable tale", the commander of the Armenian Section of "Aviagruppa" is said to have "drawn the necessary conclusions."

MILITARY (ARMY)

1. During the week, according to local press reports, President BREZHNEV of the Presidium, Supreme Soviet, presented awards for government service to civilians and military. The military recipients were:

a. Order of Lenin to:

Chief Marshal of Artillery S. S. VARENTSOV
General Colonel I. I. YAKUBOVSKY
General of Army I. V. TYULENEV
General of Army D. D. LELYUSHENKO

b. Order of Red Star to:

General Colonel I. T. KOROVNIKOV
General Colonel S. S. SHATILOV

Comment:

These awards are occasioned by achieving a decade in age, TYULENEV his 70th and YAKUBOVSKY his 50th. Press notices of these awards were made as early as September 15, 1961 for VARENTSOV and apparently BREZHNEV has been too busy to assemble the group in the Kremlin until now.

2. MALINOVSKII departed March 12 from Moscow for Morocco. His visit following so soon after the December visit of the Moroccan military delegation to Moscow possibly indicates some more stones need to be turned in the arms negotiations.

3. Preparations for May Day Parade.

Five command cars, 28 Amphibious Reconnaissance vehicles, 40 Personnel Carriers and 11 other command and support vehicles participated in the first May Day parade practice in the early morning hours of March 16. The practice was held on KHOLKHOZNAYA PLOSHCHAD' which was appropriately marked to duplicate the guide lines on Red Square. It is believed that the object of this practice was to train drivers in maintaining vehicular

alignment while passing in review. To date there has been no indication that heavy equipment (Tanks and Rockets) has been assembled in its usual place on Central Airfield.

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Comment:

The first practice for the 1961 May Day Parade occurred on March 15. The timing of the first practice for the 1962 parade indicates that a normal period of parade preparations can be expected. Heavy equipment should appear soon.

AIR. The March 14 issue of Sovetskiy Patriot, a DOSAAF bi-weekly, carries an article in which criticism is aimed at the DOSAAF collectives of several Moscow enterprises. It cites a number of DOSAAF organizations where "the training of workers on PVO (Anti Aircraft Defense) measures is weakly organized." Under the heading "Meeting of the Defense Active", the article reports on a gathering in Moscow's Proletarskiy Raion of Party and Komsomol members, Soviet workers and DOSAAF activists. The meeting heard a report by the secretary of the Raion Committee on "measures for improving mass-defense work in the Raion". It also heard the charge that a number of DOSAAF collectives were "failing to meet requirements resulting from the decisions of the 22nd Congress CPSU".

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